4:Stegmiller--M-4,5(no date)1925 AR7 Khasi AR7

Arrow Shooting and Hunting Customs of the Khasi
by P.F. Stegmiller, S.D.S., Apostolic Missionary
of Assam.

411

1. Arrow Shooting and Its Implements.

Corresponding to the general interest which is shown in arrow shooting, the tools that belong to this art are prepared with great skill and ability, (1) namely the bow, the arrow, and

1. Hermann Meyer, Pfeil und Bogen in Zentralbrasilien, (Leipzig, 1895), p. 16. [Bows and Arrows in Central Brazil].

the target.

911 A kind of bamboo with many knots is used
922 for the Khasi bow (ka rynthieh), and it is cut out in one piece so that there are at least five knots on the bow. The length of the bow is about 1.5 meters. It is not a matter of indifference how long the bow is. The best shots claim that the bow must be made to measure and must be made shoulder height. The size of the man determines the size of the bow. (2)

2. Bruno Adler, Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie, [International Archive for Ethnography] Vol. 14, Supplement: "Der nordasiatische Pfeil", [The North Asian Arrow], p. 14: "The long arrow of the Japanese corresponds to the longest bow which we find in Asia-phenomena which are in the greatest contrast to the small figure of the Japanese."

4: Stegmiller M-4, 5 (no date) 1925
AR7 Khasi AR7

000

ARROW SHOOTING AND HUNTING OF THE KHASI

(PFEILSCHIESSEN UND JAGDGEBRÄUCHE DER KHASI)

By P. F. Stegmiller

Anthropos, Vol. XX (1925), pp. 607-625

Translated from the German by Elizabeth Knight

Human Relations Area Files

New Haven, 1956

[Title page]

AR7 Knosi An7

711
284
322

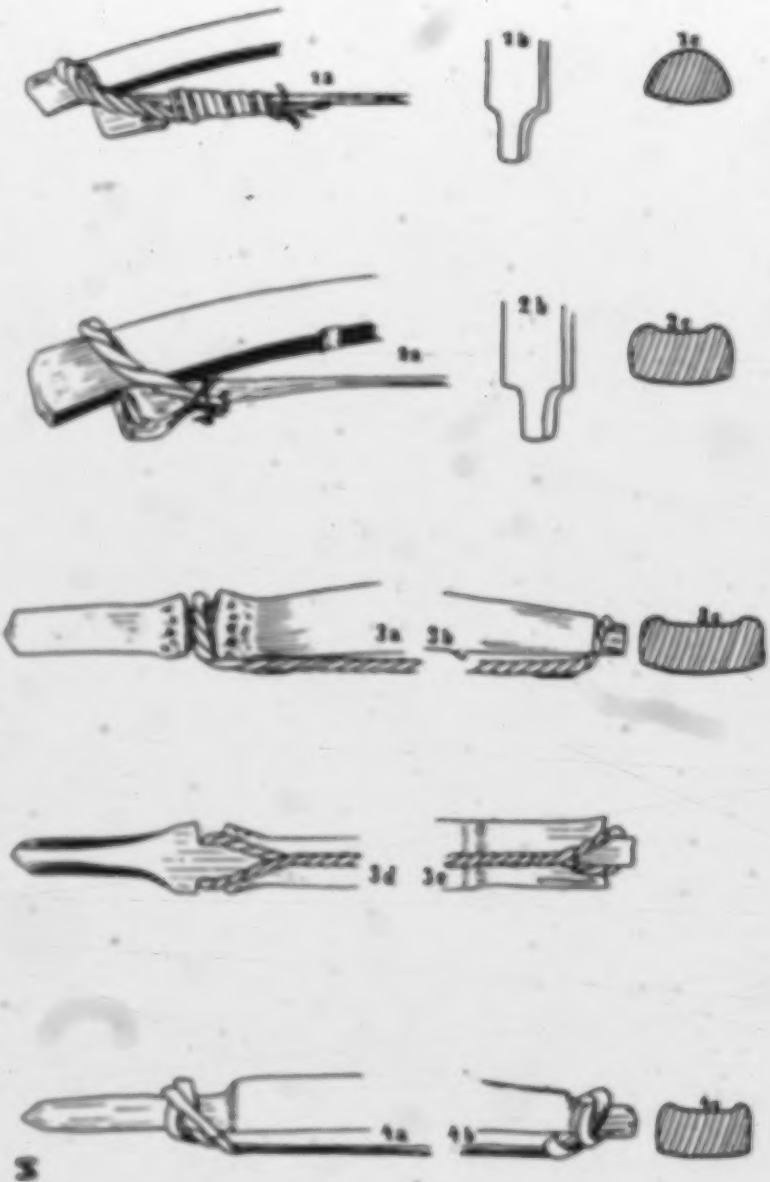

Fig. I

When a strong bamboo with many knots is found, it is cut off and split after the length has been determined. The outside of the bow in smaller bows is rounded off; (3) 411 322

3. Illustration I, fig. 1c.

for the usual bows and the larger ones almost the full half of the bamboo is taken. A little is cut off only on the sides so that the profile of the bow nearly forms a right angle. (4) In each case the shiny

4. Illustration I, figs. 2,3,4c.

outer side of the bamboo becomes the inside of the bow. The bow becomes smaller towards the ends. The ends are rounded off. Underneath one end, about 3 centimeters from the end, a notch is made, into which the string is put directly without any other means of fastening. The string remains fastened by pulling the loop taut. At the other end of the bow a peg is cut, around which the string is hung just before the bow is used. Often both ends of the bow end in a point. (5)

5. Illustration I, fig. 1, 2b.

The bow must not be kept strung but must be unstrung when left unused for a while. Stringing the bow is always done in this way. The archer takes the bow in his left hand while standing, resting on the ground the end to which the string always remains attached, and then pressing down the other end with his right hand as far as is necessary to hang the loop of the string around 411 284

411 the peg. In many cases with bows with the
284 points indented the string is attached by
means of a special loop of bast or split bamboo (u thri), but it is also fastened directly by hanging around the peg. [608] [Illustration I. Khasi Bows. 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e, 4a, 4b, 4c]. [609] The bow is carved flat in the middle and a strip of reed palm is wound around it so that there is a band 12 to 15 centimeters wide around it. The purpose of this is to provide a surer grip, as the left hand, which carries the bow when shooting, gets a better grip on the ribbed foundation. In other places also, primarily at the ends of the bow, such reed strips are fastened and merely serve the purpose of ornamentation.

411 When the bow is completed, it is thoroughly
322 smoked. The smoking takes place in the hut. In the center of the hut a fire burns constantly in a hearth of earth or of stone, the smoke of which, since there is no vent or chimney, seeks a way out the best it can. Above the fire a swing is set up from the ceiling on which the wood lies for drying. The bow and also the string are left lying on this swing until the desired result occurs. Smoked bows are more resistant to dampness, longer lasting, and considerably tougher. The smoking has no effect on the flexibility of the bow. (o)

411
284

o. Ethongraphic Museum Munich: Bows As, 108, a, b, c, have 3 knots; bow As, 28, has 4 knots; bow J has 3 knots; bow S has 5 knots; bows As, 108, a, b, c, have a length of 119.5 centimeters; bow As, 28 has a length of 114 centimeters; bow J has a

411
284

length of 141 centimeters; bow S has a length of 156 centimeters; bows As, a, b, c, have a breadth of 22 millimeters in the middle, and 17 millimeters at the ends; bow As, 28, has a breadth of 27 millimeters in the middle and 18 millimeters at the ends; bow J has a breadth of 25 millimeters in the middle, and 12 to 16 millimeters at the ends; bow S has a breadth of 32 millimeters in the middle, and 12 to 18 millimeters at the ends; bow S gets smaller and smaller at an even rate towards the end to which the string is attached just before the bow is shot, while it gets too high at the other end. Height of the bow in the middle is 15 millimeters, at one end 12 millimeters, at the other 17 millimeters; bow J gets smaller and smaller at an even rate towards the end where the string is attached just before the bow is shot, while at the other end it becomes too round. Height in the middle 15 millimeters, at one end 12 millimeters (in the breadth), at the other end 12 millimeters (about on the average). None of the bows has either a wrapped handgrip nor any other ornamentation.

411
283 . For making the string (u ksai) the Khasi split a bamboo and split a strip of it off which they smoke thoroughly. The string is uniform for bows with a circular notch; for bows with tapered points, it becomes thicker towards the ends, on which braces are cut from the bamboo knots made from one piece with the string. The kinds of bamboo used for the strings are called u spit, u skhen and u siej-lieh by the Khasi. Bast string, twisted many times, is also used for the string. The bamboo strings are smoked (see above).[1] The strings obtained thus are extremely strong and can stand great tension. With a bow of 150 centimeters the height of the arc, i.e., the span of a strung bow amounts to 10 to 12 centimeters. Often, however, the string is almost the length of the bow and no arc results. When shooting the arc is increased by tightening the string to 60 centimeters. Thus the bow is a powerful, mighty /o10/ sling, which sends off the arrow without any mechanism other than pulling back the string and moving back the bent bamboo. (7)

411
284 7. Bow As, 108, b, has a bamboo string with 5 knots, the shiny side facing inward. The string is 4 millimeters wide in the middle and 7 millimeters wide at the ends. At each end there is a brace cut out of a piece with the string. The string is fastened to the indented tips by means of a threefold bamboo lace (u thri). The string and the bamboo lace are fastened by a strip of bamboo 3 millimeters wide. Illustration I, fig. 1a, height of the arc 9 centimeters,

1 [See category 116, p. 4--Analyst]

weight of the bow 190 grams. Bows 108, a, b, c, can scarcely have been used for sport, more probably they are children's bows, unless they were made deliberately for selling to Europeans. Bows As, 28, has a bamboo string with five knots, 3 millimeters wide in the middle and 8 millimeters wide at the ends and at both ends there are braces made out of a piece with the string. The outer shiny side of the bamboo string that is turned inward is scraped off with the exception of the ends of the string. There it is split and bent back as a covering for the brace. The string is fastened on both sides of the indented tips by means of a double bast lace. Both are held together with wire. Illustration I, fig. 2a, height of the arc 8 centimeters, weight of the bow 330 grams. Bow J has a bamboo string with two knots, 3 millimeters wide throughout without a brace. It is fastened at the pegs by hanging directly. Weight of the bow 330 grams. Illustration I, fig. 4a, 4b. Bow S has a threefold string of bast. This bast string is hung around the notch and the peg (indented tip) like a loop. The knots that tie the loop are 30 centimeters and 19 centimeters respectively from the ends. Weight of the bow is 449 grams. Illustration I, figs. 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d. Both of the bows mentioned last have no

411
284

411
284 arc height since the strings are as long as the bows.

411
526 The Khasi make the followings kinds of arrows:

1. Feathered arrows ('nam-pur).
2. Unfeathered arrows ('nam).

Feathered or unfeathered ones are: a) hunting arrows, b) arrows for sport. Always feathered are c) children's arrows.

Ad a) Hunting arrows (u 'nam-pliang) are about 70 centimeters long, and have tips like a spear with barbs. (8) The weight of the hunting

8. Illustration II, figs. 2a, 2b.

arrows is about 25 grams. These arrows are still poisoned nowadays.

Ad b) Arrows for sport (u 'nam-sop) are about 60 centimeters long and have round, conical iron tips. (9) Weight of the arrow for

9. Illustration II, fig. 1.

sport is about 8 grams.

Ad c) Children's arrows (u 'nam-phiah) are about 50 centimeters long, and have round points or none at all. The feathering is different from that of the other arrows (cf. the latter).

411

Shafts of the Arrows

All the arrows are made of a very thin bamboo (u 'nam-long or igrâ) and smoked. When possible bamboo free of knots is used. The arrow is about 6 to 7 millimeters thick. The length of the arrow varies greatly. For the arrow and the bow must complement each other inwardly just as they belong together externally.

(10)

411
526
326
531

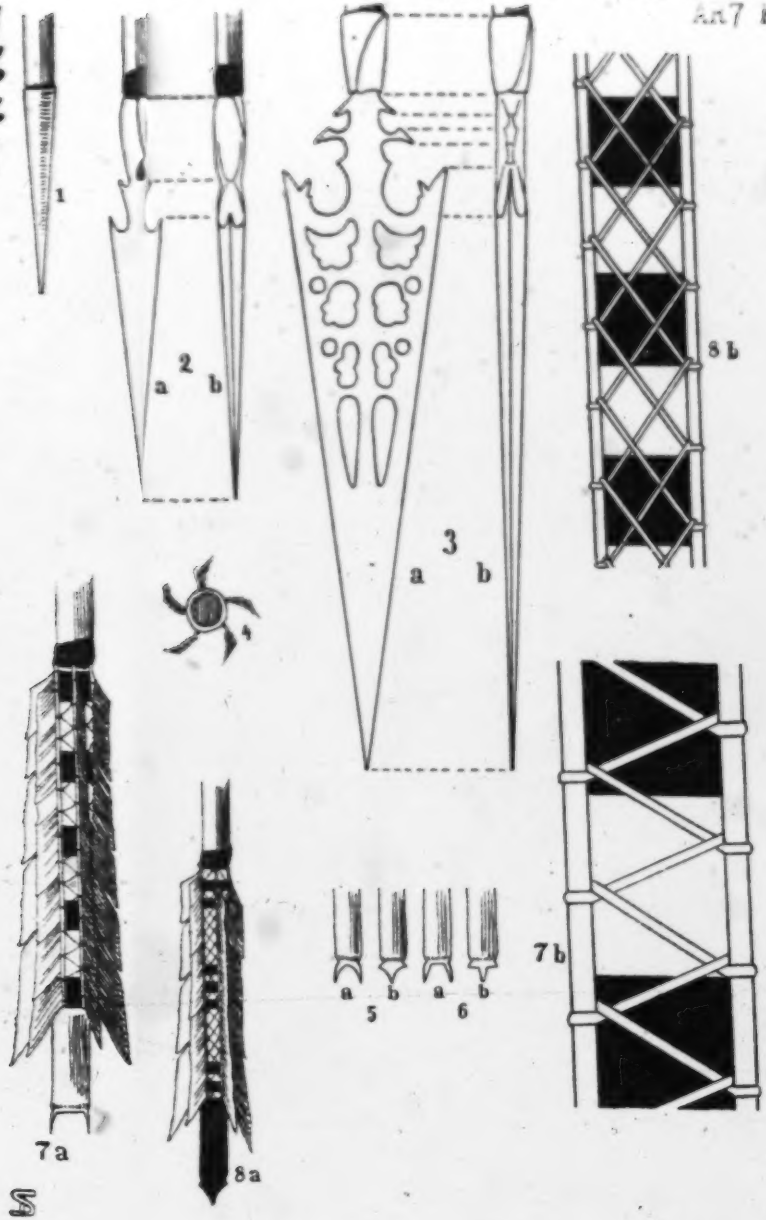

Fig. 2

411

10. Dr. R. Karutz, Die afrikanischen Bogen, Pfeile und Köcher im Lübecker Museum für Völkerkunde /African Bows, Arrows and Quivers in the Lübeck Ethnological Museum/ (Lübeck, 1900) p. 219.

There is no doubt that the length of the arrow depends on the length of the bow. A large, but less flexible bow does not need so long /611/ /Illustration II. Khasi Arrows. Figs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 4, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b./ /612/ an arrow as a smaller more flexible one. The absolute length of the bow conditions the length of the arrow to the extent that usually a longer bow requires a longer arrow. (11) Arrows for sport will [526]

11. Bruno Adler, op. cit. p. 13.

float horizontally on water. (12)

12. "Weniaminoff relates (Sapiski ob ostrowach Unalaschkinskago otdjela /Notes on the Islands of the Unalaska Territory/, Vol. 2, St. Petersburg, 1840) of the Aleutians that the tips of their arrows, especially the ones used in hunting beaver, have such a weight distribution that the arrow does not sink in the water in spite of the heavy shaft nor does it lie on the water, but floats upright, so that a piece almost a foot long sticks up above the surface of the water."

Arrow Tips

411
326 The arrow tips are made of iron in the village smithies. The tips of the hunting arrows ('num-pliang) are flat, raised a little towards the middle and have smooth or toothed edges and two or more barbs (shaped like a spear). Length of the tip is about 9 to 15 [531] centimeters. Beautiful wrought iron arrow tips with pierced designs are also made. (13)

13. Illustration II, figs. 3a, 3b.

[526] The tips of the arrows used for sport ('nam-sop) are round and conical. Length is about 3 to 6 centimeters.

The spear-shaped arrow tips are poisoned with (ka bih) poison which the Khasi obtain from the tuber of a plant (aconitum ferox Wallich, aconite).

Attaching the Arrow Tips.

411 The arrow tips are attached in two ways:

1. either the shaft of the arrow is pointed in front and the arrow tip, which is hollow inside, is placed on it-both are joined with sealing wax;

2. or there is a separate shell of copper which connects the arrow tip with the shaft. Sealing wax is not used, since the shell acts as a clamp. Length of the shell is about 1.5 centimeters.

The Notch of the Arrow

At the tip of the opposite end a notch is cut in every arrow. The arrow is taken from a whole 'nam-long or igrâ (kind of bamboo) in

such a way that the notch can be cut directly after a knot. The purpose of the notch is to be able to set the arrow easily on the string. There are two kinds of notches: 411

1. Notches which resemble the curve of a Moorish bow. (14)

14. Illustration II, figs. 5a, 5b.

2. Notches which have an even flatness at the bottom and a point on the left and the right. (15)

15. Illustration II, figs. 6a, 6b.

Relationship of the Cut Surface to the Notch.

The large spear-shaped tips of the hunting arrows ('nam-pliang) are made with the wide flat part at right angles to the notch and thus to the string of the bow. (16)

16. Bruno Adler, op. cit., p. 607.

Markings on the Arrows.

[613] Many arrows (arrows for sport 'nam-sop) are marked with black lacquer from the end of the base of the feathering to the notch, so that the arrows of the teams can be told apart in shooting competitions. (17) [526]

17. Illustration II, fig. 8a.

Feathering the Arrows 411

The Khasi have two ways of feathering: 237

1. Radial sewn feathering.
2. Tangential tied feathering.

411 237 Ad 1. Radial sewn feathering is the common method. Feathers are taken from geese, cranes, cormorants, Buluwar vultures and the horn bird. The feathers of the carrion vultures are used less often as they are brittle. The feathers are split along the quill (shaft), cut on the top and on the bottom and sewn onto the base. At one end the feathers are 4 millimeters wide, on the other end (towards the notch) 8 millimeters wide. The split quill is 5 centimeters, the outer flags of the feathers 7 to 8 centimeters.

411 237 531 The base consists of tinfoil and is divided variously. A strip of tinfoil (not colored) alternates with a strip of tinfoil colored red. Thus the bases have a red tinfoil strip in the middle and two red ones at each end. Or there are three in the middle and at the ends two or three red strips of tinfoil. The space in between is filled out with uncolored tinfoil (silver). The red strips of tinfoil are two millimeters wide. (18)

18. Illustration II, fig. 8a.

There are also bases of leather which is cut very fine and gilded. As in the examples just mentioned red strips of tinfoil alternate with the base that is not colored; similarly, uncolored strips of leather alternate with the gilded base. The uncolored strips of leather are 7 millimeters wide. (19)

19. Illustration II, fig. 7a.

The feathers which have been cut properly are now sewn onto the bases with uncolored natural silk, in a spiral form, (20), although

20. Illustration II, fig. 4

lightly. The stitches are made exactly and evenly throughout. Figures 7b and 8b of illustration II, though greatly enlarged show how the silken threads are put on. With a base 5 centimeters long the number of stitches is 22 to 24, with bases of 7.5 the number of stitches is 29 to 31. 411 237 531

The feathers are at right angles to the split quill on the shaft and are sewn on five together, more rarely three together.

On the underside of the base (towards the tip of the arrow) black colored pitch is smeared, to unite the cut off feather ends to the shaft of the arrow. (21)

21. Illustration II, figs. 7a, 8a.

[011] Ad. 2. Tied tangential feathering is only used still on children's arrows ('nam-phiah). A completely uncut feather is fastened lengthwise on the end of the arrow by silk or bast and the join is smeared with pitch. 111 237

Hunting arrows and arrows for sport are also used unfeathered (hunting arrows especially in the neighborhood of Lamin) and are then simply called 'nam, but if they are feathered they are called 'nam-pur. 411 526

The target is made of the soft wood of a root and is called ka soh pdung by the Khasi. A piece of wood about 8 to 10 centimeters wide and 50 centimeters long is cut from the root, smoothed on the front side and pointed somewhat towards the ground, so that the whole thing resembles a relatively wide but short lath. This target is set up by putting the somewhat pointed end into the earth and placing two bamboo sticks behind as braces, so that the target cannot be tipped

411 over backwards by th impact of the arrows.
526 Bunches of grass of straw, u skum, are taken and fastened to a pole. The distance between the shooters and the target is quite varied, 50 to 200 meters being the usual distance. The Khasi bows can shoot an arrow a great distance with accuracy. Good shots hit the target even at a distance of 200 meters. The average shot can stand at a distance of 130 to 170 meters. Consideration is taken of younger archers, but if the distance has been established, it must be very carefully adhered to. A string is stretched along the ground which indicates exactly where the shooter must stand.

411 Ways of Bending the Bow

It takes a lot of practice and especially a great deal of strength to hit a definite mark. The archer usually gets down on his right knee and grasps the bow, with his left arm stretched out, somewhat below the middle of the ribbed band and braces his thunb against the bow. He places the arrow with his right hand. The arrows shoot out on the left side of the bow. Some release the arrow between the middle finger and the index finger which is held somewhat bent. The right hand braces the end of the arrow in the notch on the string and holds it firm with the thumb and bent index finger. With the head bent a little to the left and aiming with the right eye, string and arrow are pulled at the same time and after the bow has been pulled to the correct tension, the arrow is released. (22) Only the best shots

22. Hans von Stüssi, Mit Pfeil und Bogen /With Bow and Arrow/,

achieve calm aiming and a calm posture.

Another method of bending the bow is also used a great deal. The archer takes the arrow in his right hand, places it to the left on the bow and pulls the string with his middle finger and ring finger while his thumb and index finger hold the arrow. /614a/ /Table I, Khasi at an Archery Contest/ /614b/ Table II. Khasi at an Archery Contest/

/615/ The Quiver

The quiver (ka ryngkap) is made of plaited bamboo which is covered on the outside with a very finely plaited cover of reed palm. Its shape resembles a closed umbrella. At the opening the plaited work is raised in front in the shape of an arc, and in the back it is raised in a more rounded form. On each side where the quiver curves down and around a stick is attached. Quivers are not used for shooting or hunting. The Khasi carry their arrows in their hands then. The use of quivers is restricted to dances and even this is very rare. (23) [535]

23. Ethnographic Museum, Munich, Quiver As, 106, is 57 centimeters long and 9 centimeters wide at the opening. The plaited part in front is 40 centimeters high behind 38 centimeters, and on the sides where it curves in 33.5 centimeters. The very finely plaited reed palm has 16 smooth inlays at distances of 1.3 to

526

[614a] Table I

4: Stegmiller 18 ...4.5, (No date) 1925
AK7 Khasi ...

626

p 18

Table II

411 2 centimeters. On the two sticks on each of the same sides is a bamboo strip covered around with palm reed which is tied with palm reed at intervals of 3 to 5 centimeters. Weight of the quiver 220 grams.

2. Archery Contests

526 Arrows are shot on every big market day which occurs every eight days. The men and youths of a village gather together, go to the place chosen for the contest and practise industriously, because everyone wants to win in the big contest. These usually take place from January to May. Large factions develop then: village against village. The number of participants must be equally large. Each faction has its own shooting place with its own target, each next to one another. The archers by tens are placed in a line and are the same distance from the target as the string stretched on the ground indicates. Each receives three arrows for a round. The watchers and the judges are placed near the target at right angles to the archers. Both factions name their judges themselves. The latter select a fortunate day by egg throwing; (24) they choose the

24. Becker, "Das Eierwerfen der Khasi", /Egg Throwing Among the Khasi/ Anthropos, 1917-1918, pp. 494 ff.

place of the contest as well as the number of participants and the arrows to be shot. They also measure the exact distance from the target, place the string on the ground, examine the

arrows for their markings and arrange the whole contest. 526

Early in the morning on the day of the contest, each judge, accompanied by the archers and several curious people, goes to the place of the festivity. There he stands before the target, which was set up the day before. The bows and arrows are placed beside the target. The judge now proclaims aloud again 526 all the conditions of the contest. He calls 782 upon the Khasi Eve (ka-mei-ka-nong-hukum (25)

25. The Khasi believe that arrow shooting began with the creation of the world. For the Khasi Eve had two sons. She taught them the art of arrow shooting but warned them at the same time never to lose their tempers while playing. Gurdon, The Khasis, p.55. [772]

for her help and in a rambling speech recites all the errors of the opponents (26). While

26. The Khasi believe that the opponents' arrows will be kept from hitting the target by invoking the Khasi Eve and by the utterances of the judge. Gurdon, p. 55.

he is speaking thus, he pours water [616] from time to time out of a bamboo tube that was brought along in front of the target. Because of the talkativeness of the Khasi and their peculiarity of talking extemporaneously and their slowness this lasts about two hours.

526 hours. Meanwhile all the archers and many people have arrived. The judge gets up and turns to the archers, talking eagerly and spurring them on to do their best, so that they may emerge as victors in the contest. Shrieking loudly and making a noise, the archers take their places by the string lying on the ground and each pays one anna (about 10 pfennigs, peace evaluation) as a contribution. It is customary in many places to charge a larger amount. The money is collected by the judge (u-nong-khang-khnam) and kept until the end of the year. After the last contest it is spent for the "festival after the archery contest."

When the money has been paid and some liquor (ka-kiad-um) is poured on the ground, the contest begins. The archers bend their bows and each one aims and shoots as he wishes. If an arrow hits the mark, a loud cry comes from the spectators. The men jump in the air and utter cries of joy. The archer himself gets up, turns around in a circle a couple of times, jumps in the air and swings his bow, uttering
526 cries of joy continuously. Now, since first
522 this one and then that one hits the mark, whether it is someone in one's own faction or one of the opponents, cries of joy and rejoicings may be heard almost without interruption. The people of one's own team try to spur on each archer during his round by shouts. For example, if an archer has a black (marked) arrow, they shout: "to, to ba iong ba iong! i.e., hit, hit black one, black one!" In this case the opponent has the white arrows. If such an arrow goes crooked and flies past the target, they shout at it: "Phui, phui kyndat shiliang, rakaid me, u rakaid! i.e. fie, fie you fly to one side, you bungler, you

bungler!" (27) When the opponent aims and 526 522

27. P.C. Bohnheim, "Das Pfeilshiessen der Khasi" /Arrow Shooting Among the Khasi/, Salvatoranische Milleilungen /Salvatorian Communications/, 1910, No. 2.

shoots they shout at him: "Bam khyndeu, bam shiap! i.e., eat earth, eat sand!" (The opponent's arrow is supposed to fly into the earth or sand). There is ample opportunity here for talking extemporaneously as the Khasi so love to do. Following the examples mentioned above they shout at the archers of their own team or of the opponents' team. At the same time I have never noticed that [578] anybody felt insulted or that quarrels and fights ever arose. If somebody feels affected by the remarks, he or one of his team tries to overtrump his opponent by a really potent remark. If that is successful everybody rejoices in the comment and the round 526 of shooting continues peacefully. When a round of ten or more archers who have each shot three or more arrows is finished, the judge enters the closed-off place and counts out loud the arrows sticking in the target. With a great hullabaloo the crowd confirms the number of hits; the opponents do the same and then the contest begins again with all the /617/ action described above. When this process has been repeated often, a longer pause occurs. During this, and often during the shorter recess after each round, the women and girls hand out refreshments. The water pipe makes the rounds and no one spares praises. Thus it continues till

526 sunset. (28)

28. The two large photographs were taken at this late hour. One picture (Plate I) during the sunset. Notice the long shadows. The other picture (Plate II) just after sunset.

When the target is no longer easily visible because of the twilight, the shooting is stopped. The judges now announce the final result out loud, which provokes stormy applause. After the judges are remembered with presents by their own factions, the archers come together in a group. They stand one behind another in a row, each row with about four to six archers. The battling factions stand opposite each other. Waving their bows longways up and down --the men on the outside swing theirs--they march up and down on the festival place, stamping their feet in a quick rhythm. Singing and shouting they go back and forth. First one team then the other goes backwards. This kind of joyful utterance cannot actually be called singing; it is rather a quick uniformly modulated recitative uttered in an excited tone, interrupted again and again by "ha, ha, hoi, hoi" (kynha, kynhoi is the same as ha, hoi, i.e. shouting, calling). Someone or other of the victorious team makes a verse on the spur of the moment, which is about the contest, and the dancing, marching crowd repeats it noisily. Or rather after each verse they burst out with cries of joy and pleasure (ha, ha, hoi, hoi).

533 To give an example how these verses sound approximately, I will give an original text with a literal and a free translation. (29)

29. For the German translation and

the added explanations I am indebted to the Khasi missionary R.P. Dominikus Daunderer, S.D.S., who has been here many years and knows the language and who very kindly placed his experiences in this field at my disposal. 533

It should be noticed in general that the content of such extemporaneous verses has a religious slant and the language adheres to the mysterious method of expression of magic formulae and other formulae usual in the religious customs of the Khasi. Nevertheless, we may not seek for either secrets or magic in the following chant (jingphawar) just as the Khasi do not. The solo singer (u nongphawar) goes in front of the victorious team and begins: [771] 526 533

1. U dieng-duh u kyndeh
   The placing, the rice.
   U sohbyrthit ia u pathaw.
   The bur, the gourd.

2. To ngin khynniuh tyngeh.
   Let us shake mightily.
   Ban shon shit la ka daw.
   May our matter be in easy circumstances.

Then the rest shout, swinging their bows and stamping the earth: "ha, ha, hoi, hoi-hui!" [618]

3. Ka syrdeng u jasieh
   The fence, the meadow.
   Shi kynda ka kyndad.
   Four moles.

4. To pynieng ka dieng ryntieh.
   Let us place upright the wood
   of the bow.

526
533 Ko samila kynrad
Youths, o lords.

All: "ha, ha, hoi, hoi-hui!"

5. Ka syrdeng u jasieh.
The fence, the meadow.
U thylliej ka shohthah.
The tongue, the little red throat.

6. To pynieng ka dieng ryntieh.
Place upright the wood of the bow.
Ban ieit ka daw bah.
So that the affair be loved, the big one.

All: "ha, ha, hoi, hoi-hui!"

7. U narsuh, shibidi.
Iron, wire, four pieces.
U bisin ia ka syrdeng.
The snake, the fence.

8. La kynduh bad ngi.
When one battles with us.
Ngin pynkhein ia ka reng.
Then we break the horn.

All: "ha, ha, hoi, hoi-hui!"

9. U kyndeh ia u bisong.
The rice, the weasel.
Ka lengsangem halor dieng.
The hawk on the tree.

10. To lyngngeh la ka jingong.
Make your word hard.

526
533

Ba un jem ka jabieng
That the forehead may become
soft.

All: "ha, ha, hoi, hoi-hui!"

11. Ka liengsangem halor dieng.
The hawk on the tree.
U pathau u jalimut.
The gourd, the chrysamthemum.

12. Ba un jem ka jabieng.
That the forehead may become soft.
Ba un jaw ka eit mut.
That the mucous discharge from
the nose become soft.

All: "ha, ha, hoi, hoi-hui!"

13. U synrem u kyndok.
The nettle, the brimstone.
U sohryngkham shi hynda.
Wild plums, four pieces.

14. Wat iam rem ko lok.
Do not weep defeated, friend.
Ba la bam hi ka pasa.
For the Pasa itself has consumed it. (30)

30. Ka pasa is probably a demoness, guardian spirit of the shooters and hunters (-hsau?). Sanskrit: paca--string, snare (Los?).

As may be seen, such a song (jingnewar) is not easily understood. In the first odd lines, words that are (seemingly) without

526 meaning are placed next to each other usually
533 a nominative before the objective case (accusative--dative). These words form the frame for the words contained in the second (even lines) sayings.

The poem can be reproduced in the following way to make sense (only the even lines):

2. Let us stamp mightily so that the earth groans.
So that it is known for certain that we have conquered.
4. Set up the bows, you brave youths!

6. Set up the bows so that the mighty victory shows.
8. Whoever dares to battle us, we will fix his comb.
10. May your mockery be sharp, the opponent must weep.
12. He must weep, his eyes weep, his nose runs.
14. Do not be sorry, comrades, it was so determined!

[522] /6197 Singing in this way with mocking songs
526 to the defeated opponent, shouting and rejoic-
273 ing, the crowd moves across the place of the festival. Liquor is brought and drunk zealously, only too zealously, so that the crowd lighted by the torches, aroused by the brandy, and excited by the shooting competition, makes a wild impression. The raw, wild joy breaks forth in a deafening racket. Finally tired of the rushing around they return slowly but still shouting to their village, and scatter to their huts, still disputing violently about the happenings.

526 The cost of an archery contest varies

The cost of an archery contest varies considerably. [435] 526 525 In general it can be said that a shooter pays one anna (about 10 pfennigs, peace evaluation) for each shot. All the various competitions together produce a tidy little sum, especially when the attendance is good. I have come across figures as high as 50 to 70 rupees which were got together in this way during the course of a year and were then spent at the end of the year together at a great feast after the main competition.

It is frequently the custom among the Synteng, not to collect this contribution, anna by anna; rather, a large sum, which is raised by collecting signatures, is bet with the opponent at the main shooting (the final game). This also occurs occasionally among the Khasi. (31)

31. Gurdon, The Khasis, reports on page 56 that a sum of 500 rupees was bet in the Nongkrem state in Khadar Blang at a shooting competition.

3. The Feast after the Archery Contest 527

A general feast is arranged with the money bet or saved. Everything is just as wild during this feast as during the archery competition. Several strong men go forth to fetch the pigs bought for this occasion. The living animals are tied to bamboo poles by their feet. Four men, two and two alternately, carry each a burden on their shoulders to the place of the festival. There is lively activity at that place. The men stand around huge fires and chat. Others busily arrange dishes and pots of brass --everything polished

527 clean. Others break off palm leaves and twigs from trees to decorate themselves and the place. A music ban takes care of the neces-
527 sary noise. The three pigs and goats are re-
252 ceived with shouts. Without much ceremony the animals are slain and now the actual festival begins: the cooking, the dancing and the eating.

The people divide into various groups. Some divide the slaughtered animals by the light of a great fire. The pieces of meat are put in one pile, the fat in another. About ten men sit around in a circle and begin to cut the meat into small cubes. These are then placed on little three-sided bamboo sticks. All the rest of the meat, such as lungs, heart, kidneys, and brains are put together in a cooking pot. [620] The girls and women sit at a third fire. They hold the fat and lard on long bamboo sticks over the fire to roast it on all sides by constant turning.
527 The rest of the men dance to the peculiar music. Each person dances alone. They hold long bamboo sticks in their right hands, and in their left hands they hold a bunch of branches from a tree or large leaves. Some make huge turbans for themselves out of rice straw. Decorated thus they hop from one foot to another, make deep bows now to the left, now to the right and alternately swing their bamboo sticks or their bunches of leaves. Others turn around in circles, beating time with their palm leaves. When the dancers are tired they take over the job of cutting the meat and cooking and the others decorate themselves for the dance. In reply to my question, what this all means, I received the following answer: "We are happy and for once we want to have a thoroughly good time. We

won the money in the archery contest and now we should have a big feast. It is full moon now and much more beautiful during the night than the day. Oh, we are just having a good time." At once he swung his bunches of leaves and hopped away. The women take care of stirring the cooking pots. They are not choosy about the spoon. A bamboo, which a tired dancer might have just thrown away, is quite adequate for this purpose. When everything is ready, the people sit down in groups and eat the meat. Rice brandy is handed around. When the archers and other guests at the festival are more than sated and exhausted from all the dancing, they leave the place towards morning. 527

It should be pointed out that contrary to their usual customs the Khasi eat no rice at the great feast after the archery competition but only meat, with which brandy is drunk. There is a good deal of overindulgence in food and drink on this occasion. (32) [262]

32. P.F. Stegmiller, "Das Fest nach dem Pfeilschiessen" /The Feast after the Archery Contest/, Salvatoranische Mitteilungen /Salvatorian Communications/, 1910, No. 3.

4. Hunting Customs

Although there are all sorts of wild animals in the Khasi hills and Jaintia hills that can be hunted -- flying foxes which visit the orange gardens during the night, jackals, which annoy the villages with their howling, antelopes, does, deer and wild pigs which damage the rice fields, wild dogs, wolves, 224 136

224 bears, leopards and tigers, which seize their
136 prey not merely among the goats and calves, but also among the grown cattle, and at times are even dangerous to man; although there are lots of tasty birds -- quails, partridges, lapwings, coots and wild geese -- in spite of all this the Khasi are not actually hunters. Only when an opportunity either presents itself to catch such birds, or when a wild animal has shown itself or even caused damage in the village, then the Khasi go hunting. Exceptions occur. The Khasi who use bows and arrows from childhood on, who practise shooting conscientiously, dare to hunt bears, leopards, and tigers. [621] Today they often have guns for this purpose, but bown and arrows are always taken along.

224 When a lucky day has been determined upon
187 by egg throwing, (33) and often the hunting area

33. Dr. P.C. Becker, "Das Eierwerfen der Khasi" [Egg Throwing Among the Khasi], Anthropos, 1917-1918, pp. 494 ff.

is often determined in this way, the Khasi set
224 out with a pack of hounds. As soon as the dogs have come upon the scent of the wild animal, the Khasi begin driving it with howlings and noise. The first shooter is lucky (called u nongsiat by the Khasi) because he gets the lion's share of the prey. Whoever is the second one to hit the animal (called u nongban by the Khasi) also receives special consideration. The other shooters divide the rest of the slain animal among themselves after the hunting dogs have each been given a piece. The Khasi are very persevering on the hunt and do not bother about the time or the distance. For the efforts expended on the hunt are richly rewarded by the

triumphal procession with the slain beast through the home village. 224

A litter is prepared outside of the village of firm bamboo and decorated with palm leaves and other tree branches. In the middle of the litter a strong frame of bamboo is set up so that the spoil of the hunt (gazelle, antelope, bear, tiger, leopard, etc.) is placed on it belly down. The feet hang down stretched out. The head is held high by a forked branch, and a bunch of grass is placed in the animal's open mouth. The slain animal thus has an appearance of being alive. Arrow and bow are placed on the bier to the left and right of the animal. If the animal has been killed by a bullet, the Khasi carry the guns in their hands; if it was hit by an arrow, the first arrow which wounded it is placed in front on the bier before the animal. Then eight men lift the decorated bier with the slain animal on their shoulders and they all go towards the village with great ceremony. Blank shots announce the approach of the triumphal procession. The Khasi come from all sides. The hunters are congratulated, and all rejoice in the booty. Everybody watches the parade with pleasure. Some bring fresh rice brandy in bamboo pipes as thick as an arm; others bring betel nuts and water pipes. [illegible]this as well as other refreshments are offered the hunters. The crowd surges around the bier, and after the slain animal has been thoroughly discussed, the procession begins. 224 224 483 224

The village boys run noisily ahead. Beaters and hunters follow. Then comes the bier carried by eight men. To the left and right go the women and girls of the village, swinging branches and bunches of leaves. Shouts of joy resound. Several hundred people

224 have gathered and go either behind the bier or sit down on the edge of the road to be spectators. There is not much difference because the parade goes so slowly that it is hard to see if it is moving at all. The triumphal parade takes a full four hours to go a distance of about 800 to 900 meters. /622/ Although the Khasi are never in a hurry, in this case they are the 224 slowest ever. But there is something ceremonial 533 in this and when the solo singer (the nongphawar) raises his voice in extemporaneous song, to celebrate the dead animal when the crowd answers rejoicing and shouting, assuring the singer again and again that he is doing it well and thus spurring him on to new verses, when blank cartridges are shot off and the spectators are lit up brightly by torchlight, milling around in their colorful costumes, when the rice brandy has done its share, then the climax is reached!

The solo singer goes in front of the bier,[1] but with his face always turned towards it. Gesticulating violently with his hands, he bows now to the left, now to the right; he bends his upper body now forwards, now backwards. Jumping in the air from time to time, he only shows signs of joy and praise. According to his whim and invention he sings about the animal. The crowd joins in the improvised refrain, which is sometimes a repetition of the solo song, sometimes a shout of applause.

533 The solo singer sings approximately: (34)

34. P.D. Daunderer, "Khasi-Sitten" /Khasi Customs/, Missionar /Missionary/ 1905, pp. 179 ff.

Solo singer: "Hey! strong mother of bears, hungrilly thou eatest thine own children!"

1 [carrying the hunters' prey--Analyst]

All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"
S : "Hey! Beautiful she-bear! Truly beautiful mother, most exalted in the circle of thirty animals!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, ha, huh!"
S : "Now thou hast been brought to the marketplace, o mistress! To the marketplace! Hey!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"
S : "Thou has written thy death sentence thyself, when thou tookest booty from the house of the poor!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, ha, huh!"
S : "The pack of hounds, however, the wonderfully raging hounds and the man, the clever one, brought luck on their side!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"
S : "The hunting demon, the spirit of the field, the household spirit! Therefore we rejoice mightily and celebrate and exult!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!" etc.

One man sang about as follows at such a triumphal procession in Laitkynsew, when an antelope was brought home:

S : "From the mountains, from the cold land thou has come to us into this land, into the kingdom of Laitkynsew!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"
S : "Thou wast free and rejoiced in the forest, thou didst thyself well by the green grass for a goodly long time!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"
S : "The hunters saw thee young and powerful — beautiful -- in the circle of thirty animals. They went forth with arrow and bow, with gun, lead and powder!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"

533 S. : "Thou fledst into the thicket! Did that help thee?
Shyly thou retreated before the brave crowd of hunters!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"
S. : "Quickly indeed thou retreated; quickly the pursuers pressed after thee and arrow and bow brought thee low!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"
S. : "O mistress! Why didst thou come hither? Thou gavest thyself over to death and destruction — but we rejoice and celebrate and exult!"

Thus it continues for a long time. When one person has sung until he is hoarse, another takes his place and continues the song.

224 Exhausted from the exertions of the hunt, exhausted from the activity of the parade home, hoarse from shouting and screaming, heated from the enjoyment of brandy, the crowd drags itself to the house of the hunter who placed the first arrow or shot in the wild animal. Sacrifice is made there to the village god and the slain animal is divided up. The first shooter (u nongsiat) receives the hind quarters, the second shooter (u nongban) the front quarters of the animal.

In the Jaintia Hills the Synteng go to a hill in the neighborhood of the village when they have hunted and killed a tiger or a leopard. An altar is set up there under an oak 782 224 tree and the head of the animal, which has been severed from its body, is placed on it and sacrificed to the u'lei lyngdoh (the god of the Dolloi district).

411 778 Arrow and bow are not only necessary weapons to the Khasi for hunting or pleasant sporting equipment for archery contests; Arrow and bow are also holy to him in a certain

sense. For a[illegible] his entrance into life and at his departure from it both are used in the religious ceremonies. If a boy is born, a bow and three arrows are placed beside him at the name giving, (35) After various ceremonies,

35. P.F. Stegmiller, "Aus dem religiösen Leben der Khasi" /The Religious Life of the Khasi/, Anthropos, 1921-1922, pp. 425 ff.

which cannot be described here, the sacrificer shows the boy the bow and three arrows, and calls upon him to become a good shooter. At the end of all the ceremonies the bow and the arrows are carefully attached to the inside of the straw roof of the hut.

It should be mentioned that at a Khasi cremation (36) a bow and three arrows are also

36. P.F. Stegmiller, loc. cit., p. 430 ff.

used. They are kept in readiness with the other ceremonial objects of the dead, while the corpse is being shown for the last time to the participants in the funeral. As soon as the fire flames up on the funeral pyre, three arrows are also shot off: one towards the north, one towards the south, and the third towards the east. The Khasi call these arrows 'nam-tympem.